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MINISTER PRENTICE APPOINTS BILL MCKNIGHT AND REVITALIZES THE OFFICE OF THE TREATY COMMISSIONER FOR SASKATCHEWAN

2-2904

OTTAWA, (June 28, 2007) - The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, is proud to announce the appointment of the Honourable Bill McKnight as Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan.

"I am pleased that Mr. McKnight has accepted this new role," stated Minister Prentice. "His knowledge of the region and understanding of complex land and treaty issues will significantly benefit the future work of the Commission."

The new Treaty Commissioner's appointment will last until March 31, 2008.

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) in Saskatchewan was first established in June 1989 to facilitate discussions and make recommendations on the resolution of treaty issues. Treaty commissions are part of the government's ongoing commitment to address historic treaty issues through co-operative relationships with Treaty First Nations. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan is at the forefront of treaty discussions and public education.

"As the nominee for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, we welcome Bill McKnight as the new Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan," said FSIN Chief Lawrence Joseph. "As Minister of Indian Affairs he established positive working relationships with First Nation leadership in Saskatchewan. As Treaty Commissioner, we are confident that he will continue to facilitate Treaty Implementation of our treaty rights in the context of economic independence."

In the past, the main functions of the OTC included the facilitation of exploratory treaty discussions between Canada and the FSIN, overseeing and directing the OTC's Speakers' Bureau, and providing public education, awareness and research on treaties.

The mandate of the OTC is to facilitate a common understanding between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSIN) on a number of treaty issues in relation to the jurisdictions of child welfare, education, shelter, health, treaty annuities, harvesting, lands and resources.

On March 31, 2007, the previous mandate and term for the past Commissioner expired. However, in April 2007, the Department took measures to ensure interim OTC stability.

Treaty Commissions enhance cooperative relationships between First Nations and the Canada through mutual exploration of historic treaty issues. The success of these explorations is seen in improved understanding of historic treaties and treaty relationships and more harmonious,

respectful and productive relationships between First Nations and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

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Biographical Note - The Honourable W. H. (Bill) McKnight, PC

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Biographical Note

The Honourable W. H. (Bill) McKnight, PC

Born in Elrose, Saskatchewan, Bill McKnight, served Canada as Minister of Indian and Northern Development from 1986 to 1989. During his time as a Member of Parliament (1979-1993) he also served as Minister for the following portfolios: Labour, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Western Economic Diversification, National Defense (during the first Gulf War), Agriculture and Energy Mines and Resources.

Mr. McKnight is a Director of Cline Mining Corporation, a Canadian public company whose shares are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and is also a Director of several other public and private companies. He is also the principal of McKnight and Associates, a Canadian based international, professional services firm providing strategic business development.

As a successful private businessman and senior Minister and a member of the Inner Cabinet, Mr. McKnight developed a unique strategic planning ability important in today's global business environment.

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